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STATE FOR PM, NEA, NEA/I, EUR/UBI

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TAGS: PREL MOPS UK I2

SUBJECT: IRAQ: HMG EXPRESSES HOPE FOR IRAQ COMPACT AND REQUESTS COORDINATION ON UNSCR MANDATE

Classified By: Acting PolCouns Rick Bell, reasons 1.4, b/d.

¶1. (C) Summary: In a July 18 meeting in London, FCO and MOD officials told Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs John Hillen they were disappointed in the deteriorating security situation in Iraq and that they supported using the Iraq Compact as a mechanism for obtaining expanded international commitment to Iraq, although they doubted additional military contributions were possible while the UK and U.S. were drawing down troop levels. British officials also requested further discussions "during the summer" on how to handle the extension of the UNSC mandate in the autumn, given the legal difficulties HMG would face if the UNSC mandate was scaled down. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs John Hillen met with Nigel Casey, FCO's Acting Iraq Director, and Dr. Richard Vincent of MOD's Iraq Commitments Team July 18 along with a couple members of their staffs. Casey lamented the deterioration in the situation since he had arrived in his current position six months previously, during which time the weekly attack figures had more than doubled. He believed the violence was a result of the loss of credibility from PM Maliki's having taken so long to form a government. Casey speculated that if Maliki failed to deliver a reconciliation plan as well as security plans for Baghdad and Basrah, he would lose all credibility and the situation would worsen. Casey criticized Maliki for supporting counter insurgency operations in various areas and then complaining when key figures were detained, indicating a lack of will in reining in the various militias.

¶3. (C) Casey said HMG shared the concern that transition in certain areas of Iraq would allow some members of the Coalition an excuse to leave. HMG came to the conclusion that the Iraq Compact could be used as a means of reinvigorating the coalition and possibly retooling which types of assistance were needed. In the meantime, HMG was trying to develop a picture of what the future of Iraq might look like so partners will know how they can contribute. Casey believed that attracting new partners in the coalition would be virtually impossible as the UK and U.S. were trying to draw down.

¶4. (C) Hillen said the USG was looking to expand international commitment to the future of Iraq, possibly by attracting partners with niche capabilities. The U.S. was no longer measuring contributions through the metric of "boots on the ground" but rather through outcomes, although international assistance would obviously have a military flavor for a while, and he asserted that the Coalition needed to do the same. Casey said international commitment

to NTM-I was quite popular, as was protection for the UN. He believed additional support might be obtained through those two mechanisms. In addition, the Jordan International Police Training Center (JIPTC) was a good vehicle for contributors who do not want to go into Iraq. Unfortunately HMG had not seen very many JIPTC graduates emerge in useful roles in Iraq. Given that and HMG's urgent need for people in Basrah, Casey hoped the U.S. could find someone to replace the British JIPTC contribution. Vincent said MOD was skeptical of expanding any assistance before determining that the current plan was on the right track.

¶15. (C) Casey expressed hope that the Iraq Compact would also contain a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR program) for militias, which the Iraqis did not seem focused on, but which was necessary and would inevitably be very expensive. He hoped some "deep pockets in the Gulf" might be able to assist in that effort, but noted the Gulf states have been reluctant to support Maliki until they determine he can deliver. In addition, HMG hoped the Compact would produce more contributions for ministries such as agriculture and justice.

¶16. (C) Casey expressed concern about rumors that the Iraqis did not want to extend the UNSCR mandate in Iraq and urged a UK-U.S. agreement on the way forward. While the Iraqis would like to show that they are fully sovereign, the UK legal system allows HMG to detain people in Iraq based on the UNSC.

If that function were removed from the UNSCR, the UK would have no legal basis for detention and its force protection would fall apart. Casey opined that if some of the smaller partners had to negotiate status of forces agreements to obtain immunities for their forces, they might just leave Iraq, rather than bother with it. In

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order to make it easy for partners to maintain their contributions, we should make it easy for them and extend the UNSCR. Casey noted that U.S.-UK agreement this summer on how to handle this problem was essential before the issue came up in the autumn.

¶17. (C) Finally, Casey noted the British PRT in Basrah was up and running, albeit without as much international support as HMG had hoped for.

¶18. (U) This cable has been cleared by PM Assistant Secretary John Hillen.

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